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General Assembly
Fifty-first Session

Official Records

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Thursday, 26 September 1996, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Razali Ismail . . . . . (Malaysia)

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Address by Mr. Glafcos Clerides, President of the Republic of Cyprus

The President: The Assembly will first hear an address by the President of the Republic of Cyprus.

Mr. Glafcos Clerides, President of the Republic of Cyprus, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Republic of Cyprus, His Excellency Mr. Glafcos Clerides, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Clerides: I would like to begin by extending to you, Sir, my warmest congratulations on your election as President of the General Assembly. We are certain that your long experience, outstanding ability and diplomatic skill will guide us successfully in our work at this fifty-first session of the General Assembly. Allow me also to thank your predecessor, Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral, for his untiring efforts during the previous session.

At last year's session, which marked the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, we reflected on the birth of the United Nations, assessed its development and influence on international relations to date, paid tribute to its achievements and identified some of its difficulties. At the same time, we acknowledged that our main responsibility for the future of the Organization is to insure that it has the ability to address most effectively the agenda of the twenty-first century.

In the Declaration on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations, we agreed that

> "In order to be able to respond effectively to the challenges of the future and the expectations of the United Nations held by peoples around the world, it is essential that the United Nations itself be reformed and modernized." (*resolution 50/6, para. 14*)

Now, as we begin the fifty-first session of the General Assembly, we should take stock of what we have been able to accomplish and redirect our efforts to what remains to be achieved.

In 1996, we have continued our work towards the institutional and financial reforms needed to make the United Nations a more productive and dynamic institution so that it will be better able to perform its key functions and fulfil its mandates more effectively. In this regard, the fundamental priority must be to ensure that the financing of our Organization is placed on a firm and lasting base.

May I recall in this context that the Government of the Republic of Cyprus is voluntarily contributing one third of the total cost of the United Nations Peace-

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keeping Force in Cyprus and, in addition, has increased by one third its contribution to United Nations peace-keeping operations in general.

During 1996, various high-level working groups of the General Assembly have continued their efforts on the institutional and financial reforms of the United Nations. I would like to reiterate that we consider the work of these working groups, covering a very broad spectrum of issues, to be extremely important. Such issues, ranging from the strengthening of the main United Nations organs to the further development of an Agenda for Peace and an Agenda for Development, deserve deep and profound priority consideration.

We subscribe to the need to reform the Security Council, to expand it and strengthen its capacity to discharge the duties assigned to it by the Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security. As for the reform of its working methods, we recognize, that although significant efforts have been made over the past two years to ensure greater transparency and broader consultations with non-members, more remains to be done. A good precedent has been established with the holding of briefings and regular consultations, including those with countries that contribute troops to United Nations peacekeeping operations.

The reports of the working groups of the General Assembly and the proposals from Member States that we have before us provide a good basis for further work. We all understand and accept the need to reform and revitalize our Organization. Our responsibility, then, is quite clear: Let us make even more vigorous efforts and display the courage and political will required to reach a successful conclusion on these issues.

This year's international conferences — HABITAT II, the World Food Summit and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development — have marked the completion of a comprehensive series of United Nations-sponsored conferences which covered the full range of civil, political, economic and social issues that affect the peoples of the world. We attach great importance to the successful follow-up to United Nations-sponsored conferences and their impact on those areas of the world where the lack of economic and social development often contributes to conflict. In this respect, we welcome next year's General Assembly special session, which will be devoted to the assessment and review of Agenda 21 and of the results of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. It will be a unique opportunity to take stock of what we have done so far to implement the recommendations agreed upon in that all-important Conference.

An area of particular concern in today's world is the persistent violation of human rights. The human rights agenda has for many years been dominated by efforts to establish international standards. Our duty must be to implement these standards unequivocally and to take a firm stand against all forms of human rights violations in all cases. The full implementation of the commitments entered into will encourage those around the world who believe in the promise of the United Nations to help restore and keep the peace, to promote respect for human rights, to expand and broaden social progress, and to help those in urgent need. My country is fully committed to the universal application and promotion of these principles.

Another area of particular concern to Member States is arms control and disarmament. Under the auspices of the United Nations, the nuclear non-proliferation regime has been further strengthened by the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We warmly welcome the adoption by the General Assembly of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. This represents the international community's determination to bring to completion one of the most sought-after nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament measures in the history of the United Nations. But the Treaty is not the end of the process. There is need for further systematic and progressive effort in order to achieve our ultimate goal of the elimination of nuclear weapons and of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

Another important development in the field of disarmament and arms control is progress achieved towards the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Cyprus is in the final stages of ratifying this Convention. It is our hope that it will soon enter into force. While recognizing that much more needs to be done in the realm of conventional weapons, we are encouraged by the progress made during the review of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects and the agreement on Guidelines for international arms transfers at this year's United Nations Disarmament Commission's session.

We fully share the view espoused by many that arms control and disarmament are and will continue to be essential components of international security, contributing to confidence-building and conflict resolution. It is in this spirit that we proposed, as part of a comprehensive solution to the Cyprus problem, the complete demilitarization of the Republic of Cyprus, in which we have offered to disband the National Guard of Cyprus and hand over all weapons to an international force in exchange for the complete withdrawal of all foreign troops, as demanded by the relevant United Nations resolutions.

This body is familiar with the Secretary-General's report which characterizes the northern occupied part of Cyprus as one of the most densely militarized areas in the world. The presence of 35,000 Turkish troops and hundreds of tanks and other armaments constitutes a clear and present danger to peace and security in Cyprus and in the region. Recent events in Cyprus have highlighted this clear danger as well as the urgent need to implement our demilitarization proposal. This year's twenty-second anniversary of the invasion and occupation of substantial territory of the Republic of Cyprus by Turkish forces was marked by the brutal killings of two Greek-Cypriot unarmed demonstrators, witnessed on television screens by the entire world, and the wounding of many others, including two United Nations peace-keepers, by the Turkish occupation troops and Turkish extremists imported from mainland Turkey to the occupied part of the island.

Two United Nations reports on these tragic incidents state clearly that the responsibility lies with Turkey and the illegal Turkish-Cypriot regime, which used excessive and unwarranted force against unarmed demonstrators who were simply trying to remind the world that for 22 years Cyprus has remained a divided country whose people are still prevented by the Turkish occupation forces from returning to their homes and lands and from moving freely in their country. Furthermore, it has by now become abundantly clear that the Turkish action was orchestrated well in advance and involved the import from Turkey of 3,000 terrorists belonging to the Gray Wolves organization with the goal of provoking bloody confrontation between Greek and Turkish Cypriots. This sinister plan was aimed at demonstrating that the two communities cannot live peacefully together in Cyprus and therefore separatist and partitionist solutions should be sought.

While we mourn and condemn the brutal murder of the two unarmed Greek Cypriot protesters, we also feel sorry for the subsequent killing of a Turkish soldier and the wounding of another. We regret the haste with which the Turkish Cypriot leader, Mr. Denktaş, attempted to attribute responsibility for this killing to the Greek Cypriot side before an independent United Nations investigation published its findings. The recent tragic events, however, will not cause us to waver from our commitment to seek a peaceful solution of the Cyprus problem through negotiations, as provided by the United Nations resolutions. These events only highlight the need to expedite and increase efforts to find a just, lasting and workable solution to the Cyprus problem.

We are encouraged by the rekindled interest and more active engagement of the international community in the Cyprus problem, as witnessed by the appointments of Special Representatives from interested countries, including the appointment of the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Mr. Han Sung-Joo. We welcome all initiatives set out to reinforce the United Nations in the search for a just and viable solution to the Cyprus question.

Various United Nations resolutions, and the United Nations Secretary-General himself, have declared the present status quo in Cyprus unacceptable, a view shared by the international community. The time has come to make a further determined and sustained effort to solve the Cyprus problem. To that end, the Government of the Republic of Cyprus will be working earnestly and imaginatively with the United Nations Special Representative and with all others supporting its efforts to prepare the ground for negotiations on the main outstanding issues.

Any settlement of the Cyprus problem should be based on a State of Cyprus with a single sovereignty, an international personality, and a single citizenship. Its independence and territorial integrity must be safeguarded, and it must be composed of two politically equal communities, as described in the relevant Security Council resolutions, in a bicommunal and bi-zonal federation. Such settlement must exclude union, in whole or in part, with any other country or any form of partition or secession.

The security of both communities is a crucial issue, which would be helpful in finding a solution. It will be necessary to devise effective guarantees; demilitarization and the stationing in Cyprus of an international force will also be required. Demilitarization represents an important contribution to this settlement.

We are prepared to embark on face-to-face negotiations in 1997 once the ground has been sufficiently prepared to ensure success. We are not, however, willing, after 22 years of negotiations that have yielded no results on the main issues of the problem, to embark on another round of fruitless talks. On the one hand, they destroy the credibility of the negotiating process, and on the other, they keep the attention of the international community focused on the intercommunal constitutional aspect of the problem, thus overshadowing the real issue — the invasion and continued occupation, for 22 years, of substantial territory of the Republic of Cyprus by the Turkish forces.

We, for our part, will continue to do everything in our power to help the Secretary-General of our Organization to succeed in his renewed efforts, through his newly appointed Special Representative, in the search for a lasting solution to the Cyprus problem.

At the same time the Government of the Republic of Cyprus will pursue its application for membership in the European Union, because such membership will have benefits for both communities. While we hope to keep accession negotiations to the timetable already foreseen, we earnestly desire to reach a solution to our problem before accession.

At the beginning of my statement, I spoke of the need to reform and strengthen our Organization. From this rostrum, I have repeatedly underlined the importance of honouring the commitments we enter into and of implementing the decisions we take. I have stressed how essential it is to uphold the principles of the United Nations Charter and to hold to full account those who violate them.

The question of Cyprus continues to be such a case of accountability, due to the refusal of Turkey to implement solemn Security Council and General Assembly resolutions calling for, among other things, the respect of the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and unity of the Republic of Cyprus, the withdrawal of all foreign troops, the return of the refugees to their homes and lands, the respect of the demographic composition of the Republic and the restoration of the basic human rights and fundamental freedoms of the people of Cyprus. In fact, not only has Turkey not implemented these resolutions, but it has grossly violated them. Even the immense humanitarian problem of the missing persons remains unresolved, perpetuating the tragedy of their relatives. All efforts should therefore be exerted by the Security Council, and by all those in a position to do so, to bring about a real change in Turkey's attitude.

The fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations has highlighted the need to maintain and reinforce our faith and that of future generations in our Organization. Implementation of United Nations decisions will go a long way towards achieving this lofty goal.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank His Excellency the President of the Republic of Cyprus for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Glafcos Clerides, President of the Republic of Cyprus, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Agenda item 9 ***(continued)***

General debate

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Italy, His Excellency Mr. Lamberto Dini.

Mr. Dini (Italy): On behalf of Italy, I am pleased to express to you, Sir, my warmest congratulations on your election to the presidency of this session of the General Assembly. Your extensive and widely recognized knowledge and experience of the activities and functions of the United Nations is the best guarantee of your success. At the same time, allow me to sincerely thank your predecessor, Professor Diogo Freitas do Amaral of Portugal, who so ably led the historic fiftieth session of the General Assembly.

In addition, I should like to express our great appreciation for the inspiring role and constructive leadership of the United Nations provided by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

Italy shares and fully supports the statement made before the General Assembly on Tuesday by the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Ireland on behalf of the European Union. At the special commemorative meeting for the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, there was a solemn reaffirmation of the need for the United Nations to implement significant changes to keep step with the new global realities. Italy believes that the time has come to translate ideas into urgently needed reforms. Let me briefly address them.

The General Assembly is the most representative expression of the values of our Organization. Therefore, we believe that the General Assembly must increasingly

reflect the opinions of our peoples and become more democratic through direct links to the institutional realities of its Member States. The Italian delegation to the General Assembly, for example, includes representatives of both the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies of our Parliament, which helps our political forces to have a fuller appreciation for the role and activities of the United Nations. We hope that this practice, which is also followed by certain other countries, becomes more widespread and consolidated.

The General Assembly's subsidiary bodies should be simplified, merging some committees while streamlining the agenda. Greater transparency is needed in relations between the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Secretariat.

At the same time, we believe that the Secretariat should be restructured, so as to organize resources and functions around two focal points: on the one hand, peace and security; and on the other, democracy and development. In this context, Italy proposes that the three economic and social departments of the United Nations Secretariat should be merged into a single entity under the leadership of a Deputy Secretary-General, who would also act as the Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Council.

Italy is actively committed to Security Council reform and has presented a detailed proposal inspired by the fundamental principles of democracy, equitable geographical representation, efficiency and transparency.

Reform should not lead to the establishment of new regimes of privilege, which would diminish rather than increase equitable representation on the Council. Last April, in his address before the General Assembly, the President of the Republic of Italy, Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, warned that stressing the elitist nature of the Council

> "could widen the gap and thus reduce the interest of the excluded, demeaning their political commitment in the process and perhaps marginalizing them and giving them the dangerous feeling that they are token presences, mere spectators." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 103rd meeting, p. 3-4)*

Our goal instead must be to stimulate a greater involvement of all countries, large and small, through a rotation mechanism.

The Italian proposal would maintain a central role for the General Assembly. In fact, it would be up to the General Assembly to decide, on the basis of objective criteria, which countries could rotate more frequently. It would be up to the General Assembly to elect these countries, by a two-thirds majority and by secret ballot, in a truly democratic way. And it would be up to the General Assembly periodically to review the countries in question.

The Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council has found it difficult to reach a consensus. Italy considers its proposal a balanced way of reconciling the new international realities, namely the emergence of countries with notable political and economic capacities — and I include Italy among them — and the rise in developing countries, a full 132 of which are Member States of the United Nations today. However, we are willing to discuss and adhere to a formula that is not inconsistent with the fundamental principles that govern our own proposal.

A new generation of peace-keeping has begun. From its original role as a force of interposition, peace-keeping has gradually taken on the broader tasks of pacification, support for the process of national reconciliation, and today the protection of populations threatened by inter-ethnic conflicts. Italy believes that in confronting these tasks every Member State should responsibly consider making, and be prepared to make, larger and more qualified military contingents available to the United Nations. Italy is capable of doing its part, as demonstrated in Mozambique and in Bosnia.

To make United Nations actions more effective in this field, Italy proposes the following 10 concrete measures which would be designed to: involve troop-contributing countries in the decision-making process; conduct annual reviews of the mission, mandate, and means of peace-keeping operations; have readily deployable military forces available as soon as Security Council decisions are made; create a reliable and unified command structure for peace-keeping operations; expand logistical support for peace-keeping operations; prioritize training programmes for peace-keeping personnel; improve the financing of peace-keeping operations; fill the gap between peace-keeping and post-conflict peace-building; entrust certain peace-keeping operations to regional organizations; and, finally, enhance cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

To go into these points more at length, first of all we are glad that the Security Council, as suggested by Italy and other countries, has made it a regular practice to hold consultations with troop-contributing countries before adopting decisions on peace-keeping operations. The next step is a formal mechanism that guarantees the participation of troop-contributing countries in the decision-making process. In this connection, Italy will lend its full support to the proposal put forward by the Prime Minister of Norway, Mrs. Brundtland, for an annual seminar to focus on the three M's of peace-keeping: Mission, Mandate and Means.

The United Nations must be ready to deal with conflicts where and when they break out, and to this end, it must be able to count on readily available military forces, as provided for by Article 43 of the Charter of the United Nations. We would also support the establishment, as suggested by Canada, of a headquarters module for peace-keeping at the United Nations Secretariat, whose composition should respect the principle of equitable geographical representation.

Italy intends to promote specific proposals to expand logistical support, on the strength of its experience with the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) and the Implementation Force (IFOR). Already, we have made available the first United Nations logistic base in Brindisi, which should be further expanded to ensure efficient resource management for peace-keeping operations and we suggest a separate allocation in peace-keeping budgets for the creation of logistic bases.

The training of peace-keeping personnel is the duty of the United Nations Staff College in Turin, which was created on the Secretary-General's initiative. The College is receiving the maximum support of the Italian Government and will hopefully receive the support of other Member States as well. Financing of peace-keeping operations could be improved through a peace-keeping surcharge for new, frequently rotating Security Council members, as Italy has proposed. This would distribute the burden of the surcharge to a larger number of countries.

Another essential component of peace-keeping is humanitarian assistance during and immediately after a conflict. Between the management of a conflict and post-conflict peace-building there is a gap. To fill just such a gap in Central America, Italy designed and funded the Development Progress for Displaced Persons, Refugees and Returnees (PRODERE) programme, which contributed substantially to the process of reconciliation. A model effort of the same type is now under way in Mozambique.

Closer coordination with regional organizations could help provide the United Nations with the human and material resources it needs. Without detracting from the United Nations central role, certain peace-keeping and peace-enforcement operations should be entrusted to regional organizations or coalitions. A good example of this is the success of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in fulfilling the mandate it was given by the United Nations in the former Yugoslavia, where the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe has also played an increasing and important role.

Italy hopes for growing dialogue between the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations, and a strengthening of the peace-keeping capabilities of African countries. The OAU must be concretely helped to enhance its mechanism for conflict prevention and crisis management. In line with Italy's traditional support for democratic development, we are planning a broad series of initiatives in Africa aimed at supporting parliamentary activities and strengthening judicial structures and training.

The United Nations is a global system, and it pursues global objectives. Conflict prevention and the promotion of peaceful solutions to controversies cannot be pursued solely at the political and military level. The conditions for peace are found, perhaps primarily, in the economic, social and cultural development of peoples. Poverty, underdevelopment, and cultural isolation disrupt relations between countries and thus constitute threats to international peace.

Through its funds, programmes, and specialized agencies, the United Nations plays a vital role in preventing these obstacles from jeopardizing peaceful coexistence. It helps restore the conditions for orderly global development after disruptions caused by internal and international conflicts. Italy appreciates the importance of both prevention and post-conflict reconstruction, and is determined to strengthen its collaboration with the United Nations specialized agencies.

With this in mind Italy has chosen the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as one of the main points of reference for the reconstruction of the city of Mostar. Collaboration with the cultural agency of the United Nations will also prove

valuable in other areas of the former Yugoslavia on projects to reconstruct prestigious landmarks such as the Sarajevo library and historic buildings in Ragusa/ Dubrovnik.

The reform process also concerns the economic and social fields of the United Nations. The adoption of resolution 50/227 is a significant step forward, especially where it refers to strengthening the role of the Economic and Social Council. Special attention should be paid to the operative follow-up to this resolution.

The identification of priorities by the United Nations, in accordance with changes in international reality, is essential to achieving greater efficiency to serve the best interests of the beneficiary countries, as well as those of the United Nations itself.

During the last five years the United Nations has sponsored a series of global conferences to address systematically the key issues facing humanity today. The upcoming World Food Summit, which will take place in Rome from November 13-17 of this year, will close this important cycle. This summit will provide an opportunity to define new strategic objectives for international action in the field of food security in order to overcome structural shortages, especially in the nutrition sector, in many regions of our planet. In preparation, Italy is promoting a joint development initiative for Angola with the three agricultural agencies whose headquarters are in Rome.

The process of economic globalization and the growing interdependence of markets offer enormous economic and social growth possibilities. From this perspective, the concept of global partnership provides for an equitable sharing of responsibilities. The Ministerial Meeting in Singapore is an excellent opportunity to focus on these issues, consolidating the process of trade liberalization sanctioned by the Uruguay Round and strengthening the regulatory role of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Italy is actively participating in the preparation of the 1997 special session of the United Nations General Assembly dedicated to the environment. While keeping in mind the results of the Rio Conference and foreseeable future scenarios for sustainable development, that session should update the instruments for action and continue to strive for implementation of Agenda 21. In 1996 significant achievements have been made in the field of disarmament. A major step on the road to nuclear disarmament has of course been taken with the signing of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. In the field of conventional weapons, an important agreement was reached in Florence last June on arms control in the former Yugoslavia. Our next goal should be a cut-off in the production of fissile material for military purposes.

The Italian Government pledges to renounce once and for all the production and export of anti-personnel land-mines. We will also initiate the destruction of existing devices and promote further restrictions in the hope that such measures will contribute to reaching a solid international understanding and a definitive ban. To this end, we propose the prompt opening of international negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.

The fundamental role of law in the creation of a new world order must be upheld. National sovereignty has nothing to fear from the consolidation of international law. We believe that the cause of peace can only profit from the establishment of an international criminal court on violations of international humanitarian law and crimes against humanity. Italy is committed to this goal and is ready to host a diplomatic conference in 1998 to sanction the birth of such a court. Italy is also promoting a campaign for a worldwide moratorium on the application of the death penalty.

The European Union has constantly emphasized that financial reform is essential to any modernizing of the United Nations structure, and we share the ideas expressed on this subject by the Irish presidency. We are convinced that financial reform is a prerequisite to the United Nations maintaining its crucial function in international relations. The role that United Nations Member States intend to play in pursuing the objectives of the Charter cannot be independent of their specific responsibility to honour their financial obligations. We firmly reiterate the validity of the specific proposal for financial reform presented by the European Union under Italy's presidency during the first half of this year.

A formidable task awaits us: to adapt our Organization to the needs and the challenges of the twenty-first century. Italy is prepared to spare no effort in the pursuit of our common goals.

The President: I now call on His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Brunei Darussalam.

Prince Mohamed Bolkiah (Brunei Darussalam): It is a very special pleasure for Brunei Darussalam to greet you, Mr. President, as a close friend and neighbour. Please accept our warmest congratulations, both to you and to all Malaysians, on your election. May I also express our appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Freitas do Amaral for his leadership during our fiftieth session.

Our fiftieth anniversary has come and gone. We still remember the many fine statements made last year. Now, however, we have to give them practical substance. In this regard, Mr. President, I was very interested in your recent statements on the role of the General Assembly. I was particularly pleased that you emphasized practical economic and social development.

It was also most encouraging to hear you say that you intend to do all you can for the cause of United Nations reform. Like you, I feel that the General Assembly must not be paralysed by the analysis of reform. We need concrete proposals from our working groups. Then we can spend our time on the hard work of building consensus.

The need is urgent. Tension and conflict within nations are growing. At the same time, the United Nations is increasingly being asked to solve problems in many new areas of international concern — social, economic and sometimes even criminal — that transcend national borders. It is also expected to address the deep-seated causes of future instability, the widening gap between North and South and the allied problems of overpopulation and urbanization, which have been so sharply exposed by this Organization at recent conferences. Above all, it has to face the results of these problems in the form of mounting intolerance, violent aggression and, all too often, extremism and terrorism.

In trying to do all this, its resources are overstretched. For this reason, I would like to thank the Secretary-General, his representatives and all those who are serving this Organization in the field, often in extremely difficult conditions. Their work represents a deep commitment to the cause of peace and stability in the world and I admire and greatly appreciate it. However, I also tend to think that maybe we are asking them to take on new tasks with old or outdated tools. If they are not provided with the means to manage our affairs well, then we in the United Nations are at fault.

In this respect, the tragedy of Bosnia is a warning to us. Certainly, we in Brunei Darussalam welcome recent developments and will continue to give our strong support to the new Government in Bosnia. At the same time, I feel that all of us in this Assembly should recognize the extent to which the events of the last five years reveal our own shortcomings.

We hope that the Security Council will now begin to insist that all agreements be resolutely kept. We would like to see it acting firmly against political pressure from any quarter and ensuring that nothing is allowed to stand in the way of the peoples' recovery.

I say this with particular concern as we are now facing what could become another emblem of failure for us: the current situation in the Middle East. Until quite recently, this was a problem which had defied solution since the earliest days of this Organization. Then, at last, a peace agreement was reached which gave us a realistic glimpse of hope. Even though we realized that it would be a very difficult process, we felt optimistic. However, a new Government in Israel now appears to be challenging the very basis on which our own hopes for peace were founded. The solutions that appeared to be within the grasp of the parties directly concerned are under threat. Rather than becoming more manageable, the scope of the so-called Middle East problem has now extended to include the people of Iraq.

It is consequently with great concern that Brunei Darussalam adds its voice to the many who wish to impress on the leaders of Israel the need to continue the peace process, not just by making statements, but in the full spirit of the agreements reached in Madrid and Oslo.

What I have briefly described represents the sum of economic, social and political problems, which in our view calls for a new approach on our part. This can only be developed, we feel, when the United Nations is reformed. I say this because we are seeing the emergence of a new type of international community, far more diverse than the one our founders knew. At the same time, it is one which is being drawn even closer together through the advance of technology and communications — the "global village" of popular description.

There are many reasons to welcome this. It could mean that we all learn to acknowledge and appreciate our diversity and to take on the best aspects of a real village. However, there is no guarantee. Villages are not always pleasant places to live in. They have their darker side. Modern technology may well encourage neighbourly cooperation, but it is just as capable of enhancing the

hostile elements of primitive village life. It could set up a permanent division between the developed and the developing worlds.

That is why I feel it is essential for us to find an effective new approach to the tremendous changes taking place today. As members know, this is what we are trying to develop in South-East Asia. The way we have chosen has enabled us to promote programmes aimed at preventive diplomacy and economic cooperation in our region. It has also meant that we have been able to offer some wider assistance to the cause of South-South cooperation.

These are specific measures with practical aims and they are producing clear results, but they also have a broader and deeper effect. They enable us not only to manage the diversity of our region, but also, at a very human level, to learn to appreciate each others' differences and enjoy the challenge of working together.

By way of example, I would like to commend our friends and colleagues in Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar for their intention to join the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN). They are making a lasting contribution to peace and stability in our region. We are therefore delighted to be on the verge of seeing the whole of South-East Asia working together in cooperation.

What this has led to in terms of strengthening international peace and security is illustrated by our very extensive dialogue process. One practical result of this in our region was the signing of the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty at the last ASEAN summit. This is a Treaty which we would like all nuclear-weapon States to join as a commitment to peace in our region. It was in this spirit that we endorsed the resolution on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, passed by this Assembly earlier this month, as a first step towards worldwide nuclear disarmament.

What we are trying to stress is the need for inclusion, drawing together all parties to a problem, working towards consensus rather than demanding compromise and bringing everyone into the mainstream of decision-making. The kind of results we hope for were shown just this month in the achievements of the Government of the Philippines and the leaders of the Moro National Liberation Front through the good offices of Indonesia. Their efforts brought to an end more than 20 years of violence and hostility, and I would like to congratulate all the parties involved.

We see this as reflecting the need that lies behind the strong calls that many Member States have made for reform of this Organization. It acknowledges that aggression must be dealt with firmly, but it also recognizes what has been tragically impressed upon us all over the past few years in Europe, Africa and Asia. It is what guides all our work in our region and, I suggest, must be the starting point for any new approach to the conduct of international affairs today. It is the knowledge that, if we do not accept and willingly embrace diversity, there is a price to be paid and it is unacceptable.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Mr. Hennadi Udovenko.

Mr. Udovenko (Ukraine): It is my honour to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the post of President of the General Assembly at its fifty-first session. On behalf of the Ukrainian delegation, I would also like to express my appreciation to Mr. Freitas do Amaral, who presided so efficiently over the last session and encouraged an intensive exchange of opinions on the role of the United Nations in today's world.

A year ago, at the commemorative session of the General Assembly, our Organization received a substantial credit of trust as a universal international institution which, in the Declaration on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations, was called upon to

> "create new opportunities for peace, development, democracy and cooperation." *(resolution 50/6, third preambular para.)*

Today, we can assert that the United Nations has been and remains the key mechanism for maintaining and strengthening peace and security — and there is much proof of that. There is no doubt that the past year has been extremely important for arms control and disarmament. Tomorrow, 27 September, I will have the honour to sign, on behalf of Ukraine, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), as adopted in historic resolution 50/245. This important instrument calls for the *de jure* affirmation of the end of the nuclear-arms-race era. In signing this Treaty, Ukraine will make yet another contribution to disarmament, the importance of which cannot be overstated.

In this context, I recall another historic event: the final withdrawal of strategic nuclear warheads from the territory of Ukraine. Having eliminated the world's third-

largest nuclear arsenal, which we had inherited, Ukraine became a nuclear-weapon-free State on 1 June 1996. In doing so, we believe that Ukraine made an unprecedented contribution, which has not yet received adequate recognition by the international community, to diminishing the global nuclear threat and thereby demonstrated to the whole world its peaceful, consistent and reliable policy. Accordingly, we expect the nuclear States strictly to adhere to their commitments relating to the security assurances given to Ukraine by the United States of America, Russia, the United Kingdom, China and France in December 1994.

Mr. Michaelides (Greece), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Ukraine's important role in the new European security architecture has been recognized recently in several international documents. For us, this means a special responsibility for the maintenance of stability in the whole of Europe. We therefore believe that the process of nuclear disarmament should become more dynamic. In this context, the initiative put forward by the President of Ukraine, Leonid Kuchma, with regard to the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central and Eastern Europe between the Baltic and the Black Seas is the next logical step and an important move in the right direction. I would like to emphasize that the possible deployment of nuclear weapons on the territories of our neighbours in Central and Eastern Europe is a matter of great concern to us. We believe that support for the idea of a non-nuclear Central Europe would promote an atmosphere of confidence between and among the States of the region and prevent the emergence of new dividing lines on the European continent. By adding to the existing zones in Antarctica, the South Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as the nuclear-weapon-free zones in South-East Asia and Africa, the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central and Eastern Europe would create the "critical mass" that would foster the process of global nuclear disarmament.

In our opinion, the Conference on Disarmament, which includes Ukraine as a new, full-fledged member, should immediately start developing a programme of complete nuclear disarmament with a view to bringing closer the realization of Ukraine's appeal for a twenty-first century without nuclear weapons.

Among other important international achievements of the past year, I would like to refer to the beginning of the peace settlement in the former Yugoslavia. It is important to remember that the peace-keeping efforts of the United Nations were not in vain. Risking their lives in difficult conditions, the Blue Helmets have fulfilled their mission and prevented the spillover of the conflict. In this context, I would like to draw the attention of the Assembly to the necessity of the speedy entry into force and implementation of the 1994 Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel.

We hope that the peace process initiated in Dayton has become irreversible. The proof of this will be in the successful implementation of the military aspects of the Peace Agreement by the Implementation Force (IFOR) and of the recent elections held in Bosnia under the auspices of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

In general, we think that recent international efforts in the former Yugoslavia have been a success not only for a peace settlement. In my opinion, we have also witnessed the appearance of a potential machinery for effective cooperation between various international structures in crisis management. I refer in particular to an important experience of the Implementation Force (IFOR) operation carried out, under the mandate of the Security Council, by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), its partners — including Ukraine — and other countries. At the same time, the ultimate success of the peace process will be impossible without the active and action-oriented involvement of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in the implementation of civil aspects of the Agreement. The concerted efforts by the United Nations, NATO and the OSCE to settle one of the most tragic conflicts of our time prove that political will and a clear division of functions between the respective structures make it possible to transform the idea of mutually reinforcing institutions into reality. In the meantime, the international community may have acquired a reliable mechanism for the solution of its acute problems.

I believe that the experience of the peace settlement in the former Yugoslavia could serve as a shining example for the common elaboration of a future global security architecture by all Members of this world Organization. This architecture should also contain a comprehensive concept of peace-keeping, the elaboration of which, within the framework of the General Assembly, has to be accelerated. An essential element in this work could be the eventual reorientation of peace-keeping towards preventive diplomacy.

However, it is obvious that we will not be able to build up a new global security architecture without

radical reform of the United Nations itself. The need for United Nations reform was emphasized by virtually all participants at the last session of the General Assembly. This issue is also a matter of discussion at the current session. Yet real changes can be achieved only on the condition of a substantial revision of the existing financial system of the United Nations.

In recent years the United Nations has been experiencing an unprecedented financial crisis which poses a real threat to its very functioning. Experience shows that financial crises are the result either of a wrong taxation policy or of unsound spending. We think that in the case of the United Nations both factors are involved. The inability of a number of Member States to meet their financial obligations is a direct consequence of the overassessment of their contribution rates. It will be impossible for the United Nations to avert financial crisis unless existing irregularities in the scale of apportionment of its expenses are eliminated. And we expect that the current session will find a proper solution to this problem.

Against its will, Ukraine has been made one of the United Nations debtors. This has occurred due to the fact that the decision on the relocation of my country to group (c) in the scale for the financing of peace-keeping operations has been delayed for several years. The accumulation of a substantial debt is a direct result of the General Assembly's unfair decision 47/456, whose sponsors were perfectly well aware that the decision would lead to the current financial crisis. They refused to increase the contribution of those nations which could afford to pay and, contrary to the rules, placed larger assessments on the shoulders of the countries which were unable to pay such amounts.

Ukraine has always been aware of the need to provide the United Nations with adequate financial resources. Upon the instructions of my Government, I would like to inform members that Ukraine will start paying off its debt to the United Nations. As early as this year, the amount will be reduced by $20 million. In coming years, its real payments to the Organization's budget will be increased.

The reform of the Security Council should become another important component of transformation within the United Nations. We support the desire of Germany and Japan to acquire the status of permanent members of the Security Council, but at the same time stand for increasing the number of non-permanent members on the basis of equitable geographical representation, which would also take into account the interests of the Eastern European regional group. I hope that the "two plus eight" formula which was proposed by Ukraine and which, in principle, coincides with the Italian approach and that of other countries, will be conducive to the achievement of a mutually acceptable solution to the problem within the framework of the relevant Working Group of the General Assembly.

One of the essential features of general peace and security in the next millennium should be qualitatively new international economic cooperation, the globalization of production and trade, the development of science and technology and the broadening of the flows of finances and services.

We believe that the attention of the world community should focus today on more than the political and military aspects of security. It must also encompass the economic, social and ecological dimensions of peace and sustainable development. For Ukraine, this is not just an abstract idea without a fixed deadline for its implementation. Chernobyl turned the ecological dimension of our national security into a priority of Ukrainian domestic and foreign policy.

Ten years have passed since that catastrophe, but we are still experiencing its grave consequences. Chernobyl has not disappeared into the past. If humankind continues to ignore common sense and to think only about today, Chernobyl may be a reflection of our future.

We are encouraged by the Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization (A/51/1) stating that the United Nations remains deeply concerned by the consequences of Chernobyl and is committed to pursuing measures aimed at their alleviation. We hope that the international community will continue to create conditions, including material and financial ones, which would allow Ukraine to meet its obligation and to decommission the Chernobyl nuclear power plant by the year 2000.

We should also remember that durable peace and sustainable development on a global scale cannot be achieved unless all countries secure adequate living standards for their populations and overcome unemployment, poverty, social disintegration and environmental pollution.

In this context, I would like to draw attention to the initiative concerning the creation of the Council on Economic Security put forward by the President of

Ukraine at the Special Commemorative Meeting of the General Assembly last year. In our view, it is high time to concentrate the efforts of United Nations Member States on the formation of a legal basis which would allow us to implement this important initiative as one of the steps towards increasing the level of international economic security, securing the global coordination of the activities of international, regional and national economic institutions and preventing economic coercion and discrimination.

The issues of international terrorism, organized crime, illicit trafficking of drugs and money laundering have become matters of special concern. Ukraine has always played an active role in international efforts, particularly within the framework of the United Nations, aimed at eliminating these scourges of the present, which not only threaten the security and the health of people but have a negative impact on the social, economic and political situation in many countries. We believe that special attention should be paid to the elaboration of specific actions to be taken against transnational organized crime. In this context, Poland's initiative to place on the agenda of the current session the question of the possible elaboration of a convention on those issues is more than timely and should be supported. Ukraine is ready to participate in the drafting of this legal instrument.

In view of the present financial situation of the Organization, the search for new ways to revitalize international cooperation in the field of development has acquired new significance. One of the promising trends, primarily in finding additional sources of financing, is the promotion of regular dialogue between the United Nations and the financial institution of the Bretton Woods system.

We are convinced that larger resources allocated by these institutions for development would speed up social and economic transformations both in economies in transition and in developing countries. They would also create conditions for the successful reform of the global system of international economic relations. It is quite obvious that the integration of those countries into the world economic system would benefit the entire global community. We believe that this very philosophy should become a foundation for a new strategy of global economic development. The United Nations is called upon to play a decisive role in its elaboration.

In this context, we welcome the gradual deepening of understanding among Member States of the problems faced by the countries with economies in transition, as is shown by the increased resources allocated by the United Nations Development Programme for its operational activities in the countries of Eastern Europe, including Ukraine. For its part, Ukraine is considering becoming a full member of the multilateral General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade/World Trade Organization system as an integral part of its own economic reform.

The successes of the United Nations depend upon the stable development of each Member State. Steadily overcoming the obstacles that befell our State in the process of radically transforming its society, Ukraine has recently marked the fifth anniversary of its independence. From this rostrum I would like to reaffirm that the choice of the Ukrainian people in favour of independent democratic development is final and irreversible.

The adoption on 28 June of this year of the Constitution of Ukraine has become an event of historic importance for the Ukrainian people. As President Leonid Kuchma emphasized,

> "It is an event of a great significance belonging to those few historical dates which unite people not by the iron fist but by the imperatives of the heart, and which turn a population into a nation and a territory into a State."

In adopting its fundamental law, Ukraine has chosen its own model of State-building and for reformatting its public life. In drafting the law, Ukrainian legislators benefited not only from previous historical experiences — such as that provided by Pylyp Orlyk, a famous seventeenth-century Ukrainian public figure who wrote one of the first European democratic constitutions — but also drew upon the modern experience, in particular that of the members of the Council of Europe.

We in Ukraine are consistently building a sovereign, independent, democratic and socially-oriented State which promotes human rights as the highest social value. Under extremely difficult circumstances, we have managed to follow the European model of public life.

I would like to emphasize that integration into European and Euro-Atlantic structures is a strategic goal of Ukraine. At the same time my country is still committed to non-bloc status. Having yesterday become an observer in the Non-Aligned Movement, Ukraine once again proved this.

No less important for us remain relations with the newly independent States of the former Soviet Union,

notably with the Russian Federation, to which we are linked by common historical experiences.

Transformations initiated by the market reform of the economy are becoming increasingly perceptible in Ukraine. The recent introduction of a new currency, the hryvnya, proves conclusively that the radical economic changes in Ukraine have become irreversible. The first results of monetary reform show that in addition to a positive impact on business activities, it has had a stabilizing psychological effect on the Ukrainian people.

Our society is in the process of formation. We realize that ours is a long and difficult path. There are a number of important objectives we have to achieve. This will require the gradual revival of democratic standards and their introduction into the fabric of Ukrainian society, which has been scarred by the totalitarian policies of the last decades.

While advancing along this road, Ukraine will continue to count on the support of the international community. At the same time, I would like to reaffirm that Ukraine will continue to be committed to supporting the United Nations which, like my own country, is experiencing a difficult but vital time of transformation. This is the imperative of our times, and we have to meet this challenge.

The Acting President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Paraguay, His Excellency Mr. Rubén Darío Melgarejo Lanzoni.

Mr. Melgarejo Lanzoni (Paraguay) (*interpretation from Spanish*): It is an honour for me, on behalf of Paraguay, its people and its Government, to wish the President of the General Assembly, Ambassador Razali Ismail, every success in his endeavours. We wish also to emphasize the excellent work accomplished by President Diogo Freitas do Amaral, who tirelessly led the proceedings of the past session.

For Paraguay, the United Nations is a form that has guaranteed the free debate of ideas and the participation of all without discrimination or exclusion. For a long time, the United Nations has been the mandatory beacon of our nations when their essential rights were threatened. For Paraguayans, the fundamental rights of men and women, one of the pillars of the United Nations, are today vital — and not just rhetoric — in the search for world peace, freedom and security, which only democratic civilian Governments can guarantee.

The new historical reality we face — knowing immediately what happens elsewhere in the world and within or countries — means that we all must share a greater responsibility and solidarity. The globalization of today's world is such that a problem besetting one nation is not an isolated matter, but rather one that must be considered by all.

This is why we will have to rethink the age-old question of what path all men and women should take. While we belong to diverse ideologies and cultures, we must nevertheless secure equality, rights and freedoms.

Our contributions and suggestions for strengthening the Organization and adapting it to the new realities of today's world therefore are made in the spirit of cooperation. This is why we request that the reforms to be adopted in the framework of the United Nations be aimed at reducing its fragmentation in order to make it a more functionally integrated structure. Such reform will make possible more fluid communication and much more efficient coordination. This is why we insist on reform to eliminate unnecessary costs through the consolidation of the programmes aimed at the harmonious development of our peoples, and to rationalize and optimize existing resources in order to avoid the duplication of human or economic efforts.

The Government of Paraguay, aware of its international commitments, has made enormous efforts to fulfil its financial obligations to the United Nations. In this regard, we send out an appeal for payments of assessed contributions to be made within established deadlines in order to ensure the operation of the Organization. The principle of equity so requires this.

We must also state that Paraguay's position on the reform of the United Nations is clear with respect to the General Assembly. We consider this body not only a model of democratic decision-making, but also — given its high degree of universality and free exchange of ideas — the most important organ of the system. We support the expansion of the Security Council, which requires a larger number of permanent and non-permanent members on the basis of equitable geographic distribution. In this connection, we support the view that Latin America should be represented among the permanent members, in addition to countries such as Germany and Japan. Paraguay maintains that the exercise of the veto should evolve towards innovative mechanisms that would be used more objectively.

Programmes that make sustainable economic development possible constitute another aspect the system must take into account. Our country is promoting a social market economy, free and respectful of private initiative, but without disregarding the share of responsibility borne by the Government. We therefore view with satisfaction the leading role of the United Nations in the field of sustainable human development. In this connection, we wish to underscore the binding conventions on the environment, the commitment made by 118 Heads of State and Government to put an end to poverty, unemployment and social marginalization, the important results achieved at Habitat II and the Midrand Declaration of the ninth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

We particularly endorse paragraph 17 of that Declaration, which states that

> "The lack of territorial access to the sea, aggravated by remoteness and isolation from world markets, imposes serious constraints on the overall socio-economic development efforts of the land-locked developing countries." (*TD/377, para. 17*)

As such, those countries require sufficient international cooperation to maintain and improve their transportation and commercial-exchange infrastructure.

Having signed the aforementioned conventions and having participated in the aforementioned conference, the Paraguayan national Government adopted concrete measures to implement the provisions of the plans of action that emerged from those meetings. Thus, following the mandate of the World Summit for Social Development, a secretariat for social action was established at the ministerial level, reporting to the presidency of the Republic. Its fundamental purpose will be to prepare public policy on social projects and to coordinate the actions of the Government and civil society in order to improve our people's standard of living.

We have also prepared a strategic plan to improve education, in conjunction with the educational reform currently being implemented by the national Government. We have also devised a map of basic needs — which is also known as poverty mapping. We have carried out a household survey covering not only urban, but also rural areas. We are at the moment preparing a system of social indicators and social expenditures.

Furthermore, a year after the holding of the Fourth World Conference on Women, the public and private sectors at large have been made keenly aware of its Platform for Action, thus fortifying policies relating to gender.

I wish to express my Government's deep gratitude to the United Nations system, and particularly to its Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who has constantly and tirelessly helped us work towards the well-being of the people of Paraguay.

We are aware that our age is marked by unusual characteristics. Contemporary history defines us differently. Concepts have changed. Today we speak more positively and effectively about integration, cooperation and complementarity. The time of sterile confrontation is behind us. This is a time of solidarity and of reciprocal and diverse cooperation; constructive and creative interdependence is the key to our daily coexistence.

Today's world needs not only a new economic order, but also a new international cultural order. Science, knowledge and technology must be our universal heritage. An awareness of solidarity is the way for which human beings to understand themselves and others. We should see that without this understanding of others we are insufficient, incomplete and lacking in humanity. Genuine comprehensive development requires the cooperation of all the men and women who inhabit this world. Only in that way will development as a human right, with the blessing of the Organization and with our strong support, find its full meaning and its place in history. Either we remedy our circumstances or we sink in them.

However, the disappearance of the rivalries of a bipolar world has, unfortunately, not meant the end of conflict. Throughout this year, we have seen ethnic and nationalistic confrontations that have given rise to overwhelming human crises that have cut down innocent lives, destroyed property and — still more seriously — brought about the loss of the value of coexistence. In this state of affairs, Paraguay hopes that the military confrontations that spill the blood of nations and violate the right to live will very soon come to an end. We encourage the consolidation of the peace process in the former Yugoslavia and the resumption of the peace process in the Middle East in order to find a just and lasting solution in that region.

Our country also hopes that efforts will continue towards the resolution of conflicts in Rwanda and Burundi in order to bring about peace and stability in the Great Lakes region. Paraguay views with satisfaction the achievements made in Angola, and we hope that the Organization of African Unity will continue to play an important role in the prevention and settlement of conflicts in Africa.

Paraguay notes with great satisfaction the results achieved by the United Nations through its peace-keeping Missions in Haiti, its observers in Nicaragua and El Salvador and its verification Mission in Guatemala, which has achieved major success recently. Paraguay is in favour of continuing increasingly to promote the mechanisms of preventive diplomacy and, above all, of peace-keeping. Similarly, the Republic of Paraguay welcomes the spirit of reconciliation manifested by the Government of the Republic of China. We hope that a dialogue will be established to resolve the situation with the People's Republic of China.

Now more than ever before, stability and peace are the challenge. It is imperative to build a multipolar world to guarantee the equitable development of nations and peoples. Equity should be the cornerstone of universal harmony. In this spirit, we trust that our Organization's actions for disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons will prove effective and will strengthen our battle against all threats to peace and world security. Faithful to this purpose, Paraguay co-sponsored the resolution on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which was adopted by the General Assembly last 10 September. We encourage all Member States of this great Organization to sign the Treaty, as I did a few days ago as Minister for Foreign Affairs of Paraguay. We urge that the Treaty be promptly ratified so that it may enter into force.

Almost 50 years ago, on 10 December 1948, the General Assembly adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Thus did mankind achieve one of its most precious goals: a Declaration of rights for which peoples and nations, individuals and societies, had always fought. In Paraguay today, we firmly believe that we have learned the hard lesson of living in peace, democracy and pluralism. The era of oppression and of a lack of basic freedoms, economic backwardness and cultural isolation is past. It is part of a sad history that we will remember only so as not to repeat it. The democracy we are building today, with the active participation of our citizens and the solidarity of the international community, is part of an irreversible process.

Of course, barely four months ago, a small group, nostalgic for authoritarianism, tried to turn back the clock. But thanks to the prompt support of friendly nations and to the spontaneous and courageous action of young people who took to the streets to defend the democratic process, we were able to abort a military adventure that could have caused irreparable damage to our country. Fortunately, our country is today moving straight towards a strengthening of all its freedoms and towards democratic stability in its political system.

We are greatly pleased that Paraguay was able to overcome its institutional crisis with the weapons of democracy. The threat of force against our institutions was combated with our democratic beliefs. The Government averted the danger without resorting to any measures in violation of the Constitution or our laws. Even at the most difficult times, we maintained freedom of the press. No citizen was imprisoned and no emergency laws were decreed. Our victory was based on our belief in political pluralism and the right of dissent. Thus, the calm and decisive action of the President of the Republic of Paraguay, Juan Carlos Wasmosy, restored the autonomy of civilian rule. We stopped being a democracy under the protection of military power and became a civilian democracy, free from interference or pressure from outside forces.

Having made this historic, political step, the Government and the people of Paraguay are deeply grateful to the Member States of this Organization for their support during that delicate crisis. In particular, we are grateful to the Security Council for its clear and unflinching support of Paraguayan democracy. This support further strengthened our faith in the United Nations efforts to maintain democratic political institutions, freedom, peace and international security.

Paraguay's foreign policy is based primarily on regional economic integration, at the centre of which is the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR). We are convinced that the Latin American integration process is the key to our country's integration into the world economy and to the consolidation of our democracy. Following this policy, we have undertaken many activities with a view to expanding the links between our internal market and international economic processes.

Another important element has been the frontal attack on international organized crime. The task is not easy. For years political and economic corruption were the *modus operandi* of the dictatorship. None the less, the

Government of Paraguay is committed to fighting the scourge of drug trafficking and money-laundering. We encourage the public, national and foreign alike, to report irregularities worthy of investigation, inspection or review so as to eliminate the sources of corruption. With its new attitude of political transparency, the Government has sent a draft bill to the National Congress which defines and aims to suppress the crime of money-laundering, including the laundering of profits from the illicit sale of narcotics, psychotropic substances and dangerous drugs. A national drug-control plan is also being drawn up.

Fifty years after the establishment of the International Court of Justice in The Hague, my country — fulfilling the promise President Wasmosy made last year to the General Assembly — yesterday deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations the instruments of acceptance of the jurisdiction of the Court. This decision is one further commitment on my country's part to the universal society in which we believe. As Minister for Foreign Affairs of my nation, I will always remember having been the vessel of this historic decision. We also reiterate, as a land-locked country, the importance of the Convention and the reforms to the Convention on the Law of the Sea. We express our faith in the principle of the universal heritage of mankind through our presence as a member of the council of the International Seabed Authority.

Here at the beginning of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, as Minister for Foreign Affairs I would like to take the liberty of making a declaration of faith. Too young to have known the founding, the first achievements, the main crises, the changes and the development of the institutions of the United Nations, I belong to a generation destined to play a role in the twenty-first century.

When I was born, the human rights covenants had already been written, the environment was already a concern for all peoples, and the universal diplomatic conventions and legal system of treaties were already in place. Such is our world at the end of the century. Thus, in supporting reform, Paraguay believes that it is necessary to mention through me that there is one thing that we will not be able to change: our purposes and goals, which we must preserve for future generations.

We will reaffirm time and time again the equality of nations, large and small, and the importance of creating conditions for the rule of international law. Here in the General Assembly, the soul of the United Nations, representing a young nation which has yet enjoyed 200 years of independence and speaking before age-old peoples and cultures, I reaffirm mankind's utopia: a common belief renewed that we can affirm this forever to be our home.

The Acting President: I call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Zimbabwe, His Excellency Mr. Stanislaus Mudenge.

Mr. Mudenge (Zimbabwe): I congratulate Mr. Razali on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its fifty-first session. We are more than convinced that his vast experience and diplomatic skills will prove to be vital assets at this session of the Assembly. I assure him that my delegation will cooperate fully with him in the fulfilment of his onerous responsibilities.

Furthermore, I would like to pay tribute to his predecessor, Professor Diogo Freitas do Amaral, who steered the work of the Assembly through its historic fiftieth anniversary in a commendable and honourable way.

Our tribute also goes to the Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali for his distinguished leadership of our Organization during the past year. We are especially grateful to him for his tireless efforts to enhance the Organization's role in maintaining international peace and security as well as in promoting international economic development and cooperation.

At the last session of the General Assembly, when we celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, we witnessed the largest-ever gathering of Heads of State and Government. On that occasion, the world leaders made a historic reaffirmation of our commitment to the purposes and principles of this Organization as enshrined in the Charter. Besides taking stock of the progress made and the lessons learnt during the past 50 years, the world leaders endeavoured not only to recapture the vision of the founding fathers of the United Nations, but also to chart the institutional framework and operational parameters that could enhance the Organization's relevance and effectiveness in a changed international landscape. My delegation sincerely hopes that we will all be able to take full advantage of this renewed commitment to the Organization to ensure that the United Nations system as a whole is reformed, revitalized and rendered more efficacious, transparent, accountable and democratic.

The United Nations, as the universally accepted matrix of multilateralism, must, in the post-cold-war era, play a vastly expanded role in the domain of peace-keeping and make a positive contribution to the new phenomenon of globalization and its increased levels of economic and social interdependence, as well as the technologically fuelled transnational linkages among the countries of the world. The Organization therefore faces an inescapable imperative for reform and revitalization.

In this regard, my delegation is deeply perturbed by the slow progress made by the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council. We in Africa maintain that the present arrangement, in which Africa and Latin America have no permanent representatives on the Security Council, while Asia has only one, is unjust and antidemocratic and must not be allowed to continue. Those three regions should each have at least two permanent seats, with incumbents enjoying the same rights and privileges as the present permanent members. Additional non-permanent seats should also be allocated to each of those regions so as to ensure equitable geographical representation proportionate to the numerical strength of each region in this Organization.

In other areas of reform, our primary objective should be to reaffirm the role of the General Assembly as the highest decision-making body in the entire United Nations system. Any process of restructuring, revitalization or strengthening should necessarily redress the erosion of the principle of the accountability of all principal and subsidiary organs and specialized agencies of the United Nations to the General Assembly. My delegation will therefore seek resolutely to uphold the authority of the General Assembly as enshrined in the Charter and, consequently, will oppose any proposals or recommendations that might lead to the usurpation of the authority of the General Assembly under any guise or form. Accordingly, we will not agree to authorizing the Secretariat to amend, postpone or cancel any official programme activities without the express approval of the General Assembly, whose prerogative it is to give, change or withdraw the mandates of such programme activities.

My delegation is of the strong view that reform should not necessarily be equated with the downsizing of the United Nations system. We also feel that an optimally streamlined and strengthened United Nations system will not necessarily be responsive to the needs of its membership as long as it is subjected to chronic cash-flow problems. The appalling record of some Member States that dishonour their financial obligations to the United Nations and our endless lamentations over the resultant financial crises have clearly brought into question the credibility of the Organization and the commitment of its membership. In our view, the time is long past for us to re-examine all the efforts that we have been exerting in an endeavour to identify and agree on the formulation and mechanisms to deal with the current financial crisis that has beset the Organization. Unless Member States take serious steps to clear their arrears and improve their payment pattern by remitting their assessed contributions promptly, in full and without conditions, the United Nations will continue to dither on the brink of bankruptcy and its efficacy will be totally compromised. It is imperative that we, the Member States, create a capacity for the Organization to fulfil the mandate we have given to it.

The United Nations' role in maintaining international peace and security must of necessity have a global thrust in both the geographical sense and the conceptual framework. Peace-threatening conflicts in any part of our global village should never be seen to attract differential attention depending upon their geographical location, strategic interest, ethnic complexion or such other narrow considerations of the big Powers.

The much-belated intervention and subsequent failure of the United Nations in Somalia and its half-hearted interventions in Rwanda, Burundi and Liberia have exposed the Organization to harmful criticism, which has led to a further decline in its credibility. United Nations peacekeeping efforts in Africa have generally met with mixed fortunes. We have yet to see the Namibian and Mozambican success stories repeat themselves in several other trouble spots on the continent.

Although the peace process in Angola continues to run behind schedule, we are persuaded that the seeds of lasting peace have been sown in that country. We need to redouble our efforts in urging the Angolans to persevere along the present bumpy road of peace on the basis of national reconciliation and unity.

Although the humanitarian situation in Somalia has improved somewhat since the intervention of the United Nations, that country remains in political turmoil from which it cannot rescue itself fully without the sustained involvement of the international community. We therefore call upon the international community, through the United Nations, to review its current minimalist

approach to Somalia, explore new possibilities for constructive engagement and give peace another chance.

In Burundi, the fundamental challenge of having democracy with security has now been compounded by the need to stop generalized violence and to return the country to constitutionality. The United Nations should support the sterling efforts of Burundi's neighbours to assist that country to achieve peace and stability. The tragedy of genocide in Rwanda must not be allowed to repeat itself in Burundi. No!

In Liberia, brute force and violence must not be allowed to triumph. The parties should be made to honour the peace agreement already reached through the good offices of the Economic Community of West African States. The people of Liberia have suffered enough. The United Nations must send a clear message to the warlords in that country that our common humanity may soon impel us to try them for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

With regard to the stalled peace process in Western Sahara, it is imperative that the international community, through the United Nations, honour the spirit and letter of the commitment it made to the disenfranchised people of that territory and ensure that a free and fair United Nations-supervised referendum takes place there on the basis of the United Nations Settlement Plan for Western Sahara.

In the Middle East, we appeal to the new Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization to continue on the path of peace and reason, as espoused by the late Prime Minister of Israel, Mr. Yitzhak Rabin, who paid with his life that the two peoples might live together in peace and harmony. Renewing the construction of settlements on Palestinian land is no contribution to peace. It undermines the peace process. There is no alternative to peace. We therefore urge the parties to remain committed to the peace process until Palestinian self-determination and a Palestinian State become realities. It is only in this context that the security of Israel can be guaranteed.

Commitment to peace has remained the centrepiece of the Non-Aligned Movement. Thirty-five years ago, the founding fathers of this Movement had a vision of a world, *inter alia*, living in peace and harmony, free of nuclear threat and super-Power rivalry. Two days ago, we had occasion to commemorate that vision. We found it to be as relevant and powerful today as when it was first articulated 35 years ago. We recommitted ourselves, among other things, to pursuing the goal of a world at peace, free from the threat of weapons of mass destruction. We reaffirmed that complete nuclear disarmament is a *sine qua non* for the survival of humanity on our planet. We therefore appeal to all nuclear Powers to agree to ban the production, testing and use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and other weapons of Armageddon.

To enhance this Organization's accountability and credibility, the decision-making process with regard to United Nations peace-keeping mandates must cater to an increased role for the general membership of the Organization, starting with troop-contributing countries. Furthermore, efforts such as those which entail preventive diplomacy and post-conflict peace-building, as spelled out in the Secretary-General's report, "Supplement to an Agenda for Peace", clearly fall within the domain of the General Assembly. Moreover, it is our view that the United Nations is the only Organization which is uniquely charged with a global mandate to maintain international peace and security. This means therefore that regional peace-keeping efforts can only complement and not substitute the leading role of the United Nations.

The United Nations should also enhance its role in promoting international cooperation in other spheres of its competence, particularly that of trade. Only a few months ago, the international community celebrated the successful launching of the World Trade Organization, following protracted multilateral trade negotiations. For this new multilateral trade regime to work, it is imperative that member States resist the temptation to initiate practices or policies that seek to compromise the sovereignty of other member States or to reintroduce colonialism in another guise. Developed countries should live up to their commitments and abandon protectionist policies if all countries are to benefit from the new trading arrangements. Improved market access and increased foreign direct investment must be accompanied by new and innovative ways to tackle the debt burden of developing countries, with a view to finding a comprehensive and once-and-for-all solution to the debt problem.

Given the negative economic trends in some of our countries, the developed countries and international financial institutions should seriously consider debt-forgiveness for low-income developing countries. Such a course of action would stop the flight of much-needed resources from these countries and create new possibilities for real savings for investment and growth. I wish to affirm that we, the developing countries, fully

accept and recognize that we bear the primary responsibility for our own development; we have accordingly undertaken various economic structural adjustment reforms, often at enormous social and political cost. These ambitious and painful reforms could flounder if developed countries fail to complement these sterling efforts by taking decisive measures to reduce the stock of our debt and by removing the wall of protectionist barriers. We also call on the developed countries to take decisive measures, as a matter or urgency, to increase the flow of official development assistance, private investment and the transfer of technologies to developing nations.

In a few days, world leaders will assemble in Rome for yet another world summit. This time, the international community will focus its attention on the important question of food security and the good health of the people of the world. Unfortunately, even the increased food supplies in the world are inaccessible to more than 1.5 billion hungry people who are acknowledged to be living in abject poverty. We cannot accept that the legacy of hungry and malnourished people is what our generation will bequeath to the twenty-first century.

We expect development to bring food to our dining tables, clean water into our homes, better housing, improved health and security to all our children. The present trend towards globalization and the deepening interdependence among economies should foster a universal feeling and sense of belonging to the global village whose concept we have now come to take for granted, but whose benefits accrue to only a few countries.

Only last week, this Assembly carried out a review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. In the statements made by representatives of African countries, it was made abundantly clear that the international commitments made in 1991, like those made at the launching of United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 earlier, had not been fulfilled. We therefore call on the international community, and our development partners in particular, to mobilize the requisite financial resources to augment our efforts and give fresh impetus to the realization of the goals set out in United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

When the founding fathers of the United Nations outlined the purposes and principles of this Organization, they envisioned a United Nations that would

> "be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends."

As we seek to enhance the relevance of this Organization to the world today, it is imperative that we understand that the vast majority of the people of this world expect the United Nations to be a principal actor for progress and change, and to be equipped to play an effective and leading role in improving the economic and social situation of the world's citizens. As we commemorate the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, we are alarmed at the growing extent of abject poverty, which now engulfs 20 per cent of the world's population. That poverty is the root cause of most of the world's social ills, including strife and peace-threatening conflicts, cannot be overemphasized. We appeal to Governments the world over to respond in earnest to the clarion call of the Copenhagen world social summit and to spare no effort at both the national and international levels, to roll back the advancing scourge of poverty.

It is needless to stress that the elimination of poverty and the attainment of the broader goal of sustainable development will remain impossible to achieve unless nations show renewed political resolve to implement policies aimed at enabling humankind to better manage and live with its environment, as agreed to at the Rio de Janeiro summit and at subsequent Conferences. The ever-dwindling natural resource base, global warming, persistent droughts and desertification are eloquent reminders that humankind's current destructive processes of growth are pushing our planet towards the precipice. Under these circumstances, the search for safer, environmentally sound and sustainable approaches to development, including the utilization of new and renewable resources, has become more urgent now than ever before.

Only last week, leaders from 103 countries, from all regions of the world, heeding this historic challenge of our time, gathered in Harare, Zimbabwe, for the first-ever World Solar Summit to map out strategies aimed at promoting the development and utilization of solar and other forms of renewable energy. In recognition of the important role that solar energy can play in the advancement of socio-economic development and in reducing environmental degradation, the Summit adopted a comprehensive World Solar Programme 1996-2005 with a view to creating effective mechanisms to speed up and facilitate the use of solar energy. We call upon the United Nations Secretary-General, the specialized

agencies of the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and the international community at large to lend the necessary financial and other forms of support to the Programme to enable it to succeed.

In June 1997 another conference of equal environmental significance, the International Convention on Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), will convene in Harare. The challenges facing this conference will by no means be small. Global conservation strategies and policies have to be implemented in the national interest and within the means available for the benefit of each country. We in southern Africa have adopted effective conservation policies over the years that have seen the growth of our elephant herd beyond the levels our ecosystem can support. It would be unfortunate, and indeed an irony of our times, if we, who have conceived and successfully implemented innovative wildlife conservation policies, should find ourselves being penalized for our success and the failure of others. The international community has an obligation to adopt new, dynamic and flexible policies that would enable countries such as South Africa, Namibia, Botswana and my own country to reap the benefits of their wildlife conservation successes. To act otherwise would be counter-productive and an injustice to the noble cause of wildlife conservation as a whole. My country intends to make constructive suggestions on this subject at the CITES meeting next year.

To remain relevant and effective, the United Nations must stay at the centre stage of global activities. Its worldwide responsibilities cannot be delegated; nor can its Charter-enshrined priorities be subordinated to issues extraneous to its purposes and principles. We are taken aback by the efforts of those who seek to prescribe to the United Nations a reform exercise that would force the Organization to diminish and to reorient its Charter-enshrined role in promoting development to the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and the blind forces of the market. The Charter envisaged an identifiable role for the United Nations in promoting development, which is a prerequisite for, and the ultimate corollary of, peace.

My delegation maintains that the United Nations is uniquely placed to play a policy-making and resource identification role. Its decisions must necessarily set the pace and direction for other institutions such as the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization.

In conclusion, the strength of the United Nations lies in its universality and its impartiality in implementing its mandate to promote peace and security, economic and social development, human rights and international law as outlined in its Charter.

Whereas the Organization has clearly played a significant role in the containment and settlement of disputes through peace-keeping activities, and in the expansion and codification of international law, it has largely failed to have any significant impact on the development process in developing countries. The few developing countries that have managed to score any breakthroughs have done so in spite of the United Nations. As the General Assembly outlines its medium-term plan for the period 1998-2003, my delegation, together with others, will seek to ensure that the development process, particularly Africa's economic recovery and development, is underwritten by the Organization's irrevocable commitment.

Finally, let me turn to the agenda item dealing with the election of the Secretary-General of this Organization. Since it is an item on the agenda of this Assembly, it is imperative that Member States freely express their views on this matter. We of Africa have a clear and unambiguous position. We believe that it is Africa's turn to provide a Secretary-General. We have had one term so far and, following the normal practice, are entitled to a second term. The African leaders, meeting in Yaoundé, Cameroon, this year, endorsed the candidature of the incumbent, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali. We stand ready to engage all Members of this Organization in the process of finalizing consultations on this subject.

The Acting President: I now call on the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, His Excellency Mr. Choi Su Hon.

Mr. Choi Su Hon (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) (*spoke in Korean; English text furnished by the delegation*): I should like first of all, on behalf of the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, to congratulate Mr. Razali Ismail on his election as President. We are pleased that Malaysia, an Asian country, has assumed the presidency of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly. We believe that the rich experience he has gained in the course of dealing with international issues will crown the current session with good results.

I should also like to express my gratitude to Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral of Portugal, the former

President, for his great contribution to the success of the previous session of the General Assembly. My appreciation also goes to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his efforts devoted to strengthening the United Nations.

The building of a new world free from all forms of domination and subjugation, and aggression and war has long been the common and cherished aspiration of the world's peoples. However, domination and subjugation, and subordination and inequality still predominate in international relations — even today, after the end of the cold war — and this constitutes a great challenge to the realization of world peace and security and the democratization of international society.

Recent developments in the international arena are eloquent proof of the fact that every country should firmly maintain its independence in order to safeguard its national dignity and rights and to build a free and prosperous world.

For the Korean people, the last half-century has been a period of struggle and progress in their efforts to consolidate and develop our style of socialism and to reunify the divided country despite all kinds of challenges and difficulties.

Though caught in the vortex of the complex and fluctuating international situation surrounding the Korean peninsula, the Korean people have been able to march forward continuously along the road to socialism — which they themselves chose — without any vacillation, disappointment or vicissitude, despite the fact that on an untrodden and poorly paved path, every step is difficult. This has been possible because they have firmly maintained independence in all domains of state-building on the basis of the *Juche* idea, the political philosophy of the Korean people.

The *Juche* idea, based on the philosophical principle that man is the master of everything and decides everything, regards the popular masses as the driving force of the socio-historical movement, and identifies the people's struggle for independence, sovereignty and development as the way to realize their independence. We have carried out our independent policy on the basis of the *Juche* idea, relying on the strength of our own people. In international relations, we have firmly adhered to the principle of not infringing upon the sovereignty of others and of not having our own sovereignty violated.

At a time when international relations and the situation are becoming increasingly complicated, it becomes ever more important for a small country like ours firmly to maintain an independent stand. The *Juche* philosophy, created by the fatherly leader Comrade Kim Il Sung, the founding father of our socialist Korea, and our independent policy, based on this philosophy, have been credibly followed by the great leader Comrade Kim Jong Il. The great leader Comrade Kim Jong Il has guided wisely all the affairs of our Party, State and army for more than three decades, and thus has consolidated and developed our unique style of socialism into an indestructible one.

The leader and the people are firmly united in one idea and will, and the independent policy based on the *Juche* idea has deep roots in our territory. As a result, there has been neither a political vacuum nor instability in our society, and our style of socialism is advancing vigorously, regardless of what others may say.

It is the greatest fortune and happiness for our people to have the respected Comrade Kim Jong Il, the outstanding politician and iron-willed brilliant Commander, as the supreme leader of the Party and State and the Supreme Commander of the revolutionary armed forces. Under the wise leadership of the great leader Comrade Kim Jong Il, our people will make their country prosperous and realize the fatherly leader's lifelong teachings on reunification, convinced of the victory of our style of socialism.

We hold that the question of national reunification should also be settled in the interests of the Korean nation in the context of the maintenance of international peace and security, based on the specific conditions of our country. In view of current realities in the North and South of Korea, characterized by different ideas and systems, national reunification through confederation is the only way to achieve a great national unity independently and peacefully, on the principle of neither side conquering or being conquered by the other. It is quite natural that the proposal for national reunification through confederation set forth by Comrade Kim Il Sung, the fatherly leader of our people, enjoys worldwide support.

The pressing issue in the realization of national reunification through confederation on the Korean peninsula is the establishment of a new institutional mechanism for easing tensions and ensuring peace and security. Since the Armistice Agreement, signed in 1953,

and the Military Armistice Commission, the executive body of the Agreement, remain paralysed by unilateral measures on the part of the United States, the establishment of a new peace arrangement is imperative in order to avert the danger of accidental conflicts, and for the maintenance of security on the Korean peninsula.

Accordingly, in April 1994 the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea advanced a proposal for the establishment of a new peace arrangement to replace the outdated system of Korean armistice in ensuring peace and security on the Korean peninsula. It also advanced in February of this year an epoch-making proposal to conclude an interim agreement between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States, a proposal that delineates in detail a new peace arrangement that takes account of the United States policy towards Korea and the present status of Democratic People's Republic of Korea-United States bilateral relations.

The interim agreement may include issues concerning the management of the Military Demarcation Line and Demilitarized Zone; ways of addressing cases of armed conflict and accidents; the composition, duties and terms of reference of a joint military body; and other issues related to the maintenance of security and order.

The United States and South Korean authorities, however, replied to our peace-loving proposal by aggravating tensions with large-scale war exercises and an arms build-up on the Korean peninsula. This situation urgently requires the establishment of a legitimate channel for contacts between military personnel, with a view to preventing accidental armed conflicts and the recurrence of war. It is on the basis of this consideration that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea proposed to the United States working negotiations for talks relating to the conclusion of the interim agreement, and the establishment of an interim mechanism responsible for its implementation, between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and United States military authorities, the real parties to the Korean Armistice Agreement.

There is no doubt that the conclusion of an interim agreement between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States will constitute a breakthrough for the negotiations on the signing of an agreement aimed at the maintenance of a durable peace, and it will, in turn, eventually lead to the creation of an atmosphere favourable for the implementation of the Agreement on Reconciliation, Non-Aggression and Exchanges and Cooperation, between the North and South, adopted by the North and South of Korea.

If the United States is truly interested in the maintenance of peace on the Korean peninsula, as it mentioned while proposing the "four-party talks", it should be willing to withdraw United States troops from South Korea. On the other hand, the United Nations should take its own measures, without delay, to retrieve its name and flag from United States troops in South Korea, thus helping to establish a new peace arrangement on the Korean peninsula.

The existence of the United Nations Command in South Korea constitutes a legal obstacle to turning the state of armistice into a durable peace and terminating the cold war on the Korean peninsula. The United Nations Command was not established by a United Nations resolution. It is only a product of the cold-war era, which came into existence through the abuse of the name of the United Nations. The United Nations Command has moved towards dissolution without any United Nations resolutions during the post-war period, and consequently only United States troops remain there today.

This stark fact presents a vivid illustration of the fact that the "US-ROK Joint Command" is usurping the helmets of United Nations forces and the name of the United Nations.

In the past two years since the adoption of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea-United States Framework Agreement, we have been sincerely fulfilling our obligations under the Agreement, as we have shown by freezing all of our nuclear facilities. For the full implementation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea-United States Framework Agreement, which is aimed at the fundamental resolution of the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula, the United States should, among other things, fulfil its obligations, including lifting economic sanctions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea; and the present Democratic People's Republic of Korea-United States relationship of confrontation should be transformed into a relationship based on trust.

There is also a need for several other countries pursuing unfriendly policies towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to change their attitudes, which would certainly be conducive to facilitating a resolution of the issue. We will make every effort to

ensure peace and security on the Korean peninsula and in the region of North-East Asia.

On this occasion, I wish to express my deep gratitude to the Governments of various countries, the affiliated organs and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, including the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, non-governmental organizations, and individuals for their moral, material and humanitarian assistance and encouragement to our people, which have been provided in the hope of removing, as quickly as possible, the damage caused in recent years by successive natural disasters.

In order to eliminate the legacies of the cold-war era, which has been negated by history, and to enable all countries and nations to exercise their sovereignty on an equal footing, international society should be democratized. The United Nations should, first of all, be restructured into a democratized Organization. The restructuring of the United Nations should be undertaken in a way that will fully represent the interests of developing countries, which form the majority of United Nations Member States, and also ensure the exercise of their sovereignty in the process of resolving major international issues.

Only when the United Nations is restructured will it be able to do its part in the maintenance of international peace and security and ensure democracy and impartiality in its activities. The priority for the democratization of the United Nations is to enhance the authority of the General Assembly, the body in which all Member States are represented equally. We consider that issues relating to international peace and security should be brought directly to the General Assembly for deliberation, and that a new system should be established to endorse Security Council resolutions on the use of force, sanctions and peace-keeping operations. Such measures would enable the Security Council to give full consideration to the interests of Member States and thus prevent the adverse effects suffered by many countries as a result of the implementation of Security Council resolutions.

The restructuring of the Security Council is the most essential element in the democratization of the United Nations. There are a number of issues to be resolved in restructuring the Security Council, and we consider it reasonable to proceed with the restructuring gradually, based on the principle of first finding issues on which agreement can be reached and achieving consensus on each of them. From this viewpoint, we believe that consensus may be reached on issues concerning the enlargement of the non-permanent membership of the Security Council and the improvement of its working methods, both of which have already been agreed upon in principle by Member States.

In this regard, our delegation considers that it is possible for Member States to agree upon, above all, issues such as offsetting the imbalance in regional distribution through an increase of more than 10 seats in the non-permanent membership of the Security Council, to be allocated among the regions of Asia, Africa and Latin America, and through providing the countries concerned, including the parties to disputes, with access to informal consultations of the Security Council.

Japan is taking advantage of the proposed enlargement of the permanent membership of the Security Council by attempting to become a permanent member even though, as a defeated State of the Second World War, it has failed to make an appropriate apology or provide compensation for its war crimes but, instead, is trying to justify them after more than half a century has passed. This makes a mockery of Member States, particularly the Asian countries.

Disarmament — especially nuclear disarmament — remains one of the most important problems for the maintenance of international peace and security. We believe that the nuclear-weapon States should provide negative security assurances to the non-nuclear-weapon States, commit themselves to the non-use of nuclear weapons, and draw up and implement a timetable for their complete abolition.

Despite the end of the cold war, regional, religious and ethnic disputes are being further aggravated in various parts of our planet, and consequently world peace and security are gravely disturbed and peoples are suffering from untold misfortunes resulting from them. It is our consistent stand that disputes between countries and nations should be settled immediately through dialogue and negotiation in the interests of the parties concerned and in conformity with international peace and security.

At present, the maintenance of peace and security in North-East Asia is one of the most vitally important problems. In order to ensure peace and security in North-East Asia, the arms race and any attempt aimed at fostering military collusion with outside forces should be brought to an end. However, the military collusion between the United States and Japan is being intensified, and furthermore, the United States, Japan and South Korea are becoming less disguised in their attempt to

build up a tripartite military alliance by repeatedly launching joint military exercises in this region on the pretext of North Korea's so-called invasion.

In particular, the arms race is further accelerated because the Japanese authorities are resorting to the unreasonable policy of trying to become a military super-Power, building up their arms and developing nuclear weapons. We strongly urge the Japanese authorities to end their confrontational acts against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including an arms build-up under the veil of an "immediate response in case of emergency".

The question of social and economic development is directly linked with international peace and security, and its resolution is therefore one of the important tasks before the United Nations. We hope that agreement will soon be reached on issues with regard to the implementation of the commitment to official development assistance and the alleviation of external debt, thereby facilitating the completion of the Agenda for Development at the earliest possible date in the Ad Hoc Open-Ended Working Group on an Agenda for Development.

We consider that reform of the United Nations in the fields of social and economic development should be directed towards strengthening the agencies responsible for development cooperation under the United Nations system, thereby contributing to accelerating the implementation of the declarations and action plans for the development of developing countries.

The application of "selectivity", which relates development cooperation and technology transfer to questions of "human rights" and "terrorism", should no longer be tolerated, and measures such as economic sanctions should be eliminated to ensure the economic development of Member States and regions.

The Government of our Republic, which regards the man-centred *Juche* idea as its guiding idea, is providing all its people with political, economic and cultural rights and legally protecting the lives and dignity of human beings. We reject the politicization of human rights, which abuses the "question of human rights" in order to infringe upon the sovereignty of other countries, and we oppose all forms of terrorism jeopardizing human lives, as well as any activities encouraging or assisting terrorist acts.

Today, all justice-loving and peace-loving countries and nations are making active efforts to establish a new world order and equitable international economic relations for the twenty-first century. We express our appreciation to the Asian countries in their efforts to ensure peace and stability and to achieve common prosperity in their regions. It is good that the Asia-Europe meeting, held early in 1996, agreed upon the strengthening of economic links and cooperation between the continents.

We support the Arab and Syrian people in their effort to strengthen unity and cooperation, and to achieve a fair and comprehensive resolution of the Middle-East question, including the Palestinian issue, and we express solidarity with the Libyan people in their struggle to defend the sovereignty of their country.

We appreciate the efforts of the Organization of African Unity to resolve social and economic issues and disputes in the African region. We express solidarity with the just cause of the Cuban people to lift the blockade against Cuba, and, with the Latin American people in their endeavours for peace and prosperity in their region.

We will continue as before to develop relations of friendship and cooperation with all countries of the world on the basis of ideas of independence, peace and friendship and will endeavour to fulfil the obligations entrusted to us in the achievement of the common cause of humankind for world peace and security under the wise leadership of the great leader Comrade Kim Jong Il.

The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will make sincere efforts towards the successful outcome of the debates on the agenda items before this session of the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.